

NO. 4

SEPT. 1988

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WHY RENT WHEN
YOU CAN OWN

MORPHIS



MORPHS

No. 4 SEPTEMBER, 1988

FRONT COVER: JOHN SPEIDEL
BACK COVER: STAN SAKAI

KITTY MEETS AZIZI
BY JOHN SPEIDEL



SHAKEDOWN CRUISE
BY MEL WHITE



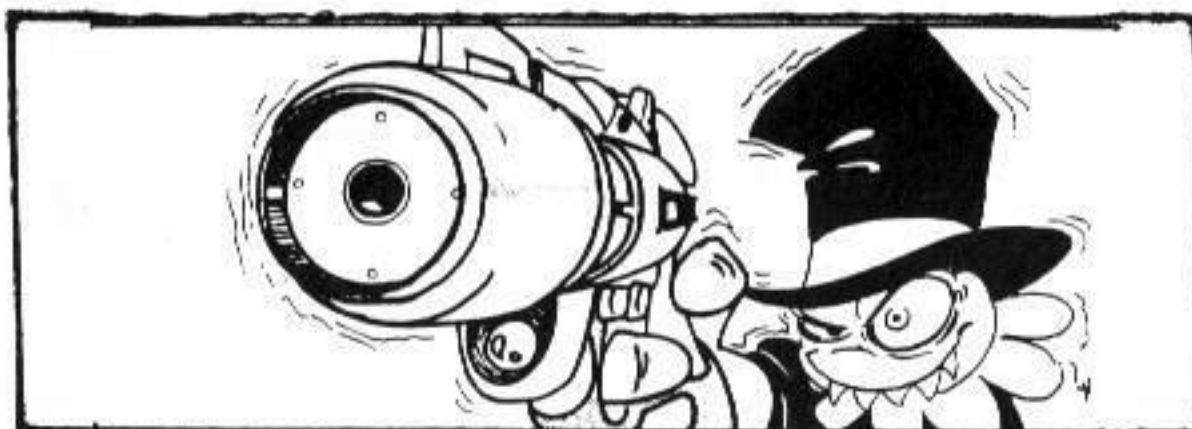
BOTSWANA BISON
BY DARIN DAVIS



BOSOM ENEMIES
BY DONNA BARR



STAR LIZARD
BY TOM OWENS



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DUCKKAR

THE CAPITAL CITY (IN FACT, THE ONLY CITY)
OF THE EMIRATE OF QUACKISTAN
DUCKKAR! IT'S BUSY SEAPORT HOSTING THE SHIPS
OF ALL NATIONS (MOSTLY SMUGGLERS)
DUCKKAR! IT'S MARKETS FILLED WITH THE RICHES
OF THE WORLD (MOSTLY STOLEN)
DUCKKAR! A DAZZLING MECCA FOR TOURISTS AND
TRAVELERS (SORT OF!)



HOLA!

LO! I HAVE
ARRIVED!
I, **AZIZO**, QUEEN
OF THE JUNGLE!
EMPRESS OF THE FOREST
REALM!

BEHOLD!
I HAVE COME
TO SEEK JUSTICE
FOR MY PEOPLE!
TO BRING
VENGEANCE
TO...



ONE
SIDE!
YOU WITLESS
TOURIST!



SNORT!



LOUIE THE DIP,...
MOLICULE ED...JOE
THE DIP... SNAPPY
JIM... SAL THE DIP...
QUITE A HAUL!

AND STILL NO SIGN
OF THE IDOL! AND WE
DON'T GET A PENNY OF
THE REWARD UNTIL
WE FIND IT...!

GEE, AND WE'VE
BEEN THROUGH
EVERY DIVE IN
TOWN!

ER... YOU KNOW,
WE NEVER DID
PICK UP ANY OF
LOUIE BABA'S
MEN...

LOU...? SIGH
WHAT D'YOU
SAY, ALI...?

WHY NOT?
WE'VE BEEN
EVERYWHERE
ELSE!

BORN TO
SMUGGLE

HOLA!

Y'KNOW ALI... I GET
THE FEELING
WE'RE BOOSTING
THE COLONEL'S
ARREST QUOTA
FOR HIM

I GET THE
FEELING THAT IF THIS
TURNS OUT TO BE JUST
ANOTHER RED HERRING
THE COLONEL WILL BE
GETTING A BOOST! RIGHT
UP THE QUOTA!

CHEE! DAT WAS DAT
MALONE DAME!
SHE'S TROUBLE!

IBETTER GET DIS
PACKAGE TO TH'
BOSS QUICK!

ZOW!





IT'S NOT MY FAULT!
SHE MADE ME DO IT!

OH, HEAVENS, LOUIE!
YOU DON'T EXPECT ANYONE TO BE DUMB ENOUGH TO FALL FOR THAT OLD GAG, DO YOU?



CUTPURSE!
MENDICANT!

YOU MORON!



THIEF! DEFILER!
YOU'VE STOLEN MY ANCESTOR'S LAND!
COUGH IT UP!
OR ELSE!

YOU SANDWICH!
I'M AFTER LOUIS BABA...!
HE MUST HAVE STOLEN YOUR LAND!

ER.. LADIES..
I HATE TO INTERRUPT..
BUT THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!



WE NEED A CAR!
THEY'VE REACHED THEIR VEHICLES!

NO PROBLEM!
THERE!

NOT AGAIN!



THEY'RE GAINING,
BOSS!

HIT THE BREAKS,
YOU FOOL!
RUN THEM OFF THE ROAD!



HA!

LOOK OUT,
LOOK OUT!



UM... I HOPE ONE OF YOU HAS SOME IDEAS...

HUMPH! IN THE JUNGLE I COULD SUMMON THE WILD BEASTS TO SAVE US!

YOU CAN DO THAT?

OF COURSE! AM I NOT
AZIZI, QUEEN OF THE
JUNGLE? RULER OF
THE FOREST REALMS?

BEHOLD! I SHALL
SUMMON THE BEASTS
OF THE JUNGLE TO DO
MY BIDDING! BEHOLD...

...THE SECRET
JUNGLE CALL OF
THE M'SHU-GANA
WARRIORS!



SHE...SHE'S
DONE IT!
HERE THEY
COME!

NOT QUITE
AS IMPRESSIVE
AS I'D
HOPED...

FOO! IT'S THIS
DAD-GUMED CITY!
TOO MUCH INTER-
FEERENCE!

RALPH! BARK!
BARK! RUFF!
MEOW! MEOW!
BARK! BARK!
BARK! BARK!

WELL, THAT'S THE
LOT OF 'EM...
NO IDOL, THOUGH,
SORRY...

OOH
RATS!
RATS!
RATS!

THE DEED! AT
LAST! OUR LANDS
ARE OURS
AGAIN!



THE EMERALDS!
UH, SAY... YOU
WOULDN'T HAVE
ANY OF THOSE
'GREEN STONES'
ON YOU WOULD
YOU?..

HUH? THOSE
ROCKS?
OH, NO... WE
NEVER HANG-ON
TO THOSE THINGS!
WE JUST TOSS
'EM IN THE
SWAMP!

OF COURSE! THEY'RE
USELESS TO US!

WE WANT THE LAND
FOR THE CLAY
DEPOSITS...
IT MAKES THE BEST
POTTERY IN
QUACKISTAN!

WE SELL IT
TO THE
TOURISTS...



P-P-POTTERY
?!?!?

NATURALLY!
OUR POTTERY
IS VITAL
TO OUR
ECONOMY



WHAT
IS IT,
CHILD?

STRANGERS
COME,
FATHER...
THEY SAY THEY
WANT TO
LEARN HOW
WE MAKE
OUR POTTERY...

FINÉ!

SHAKEDOWN CRUISE

© 1987 by Mel White



DEAR SHARRA,

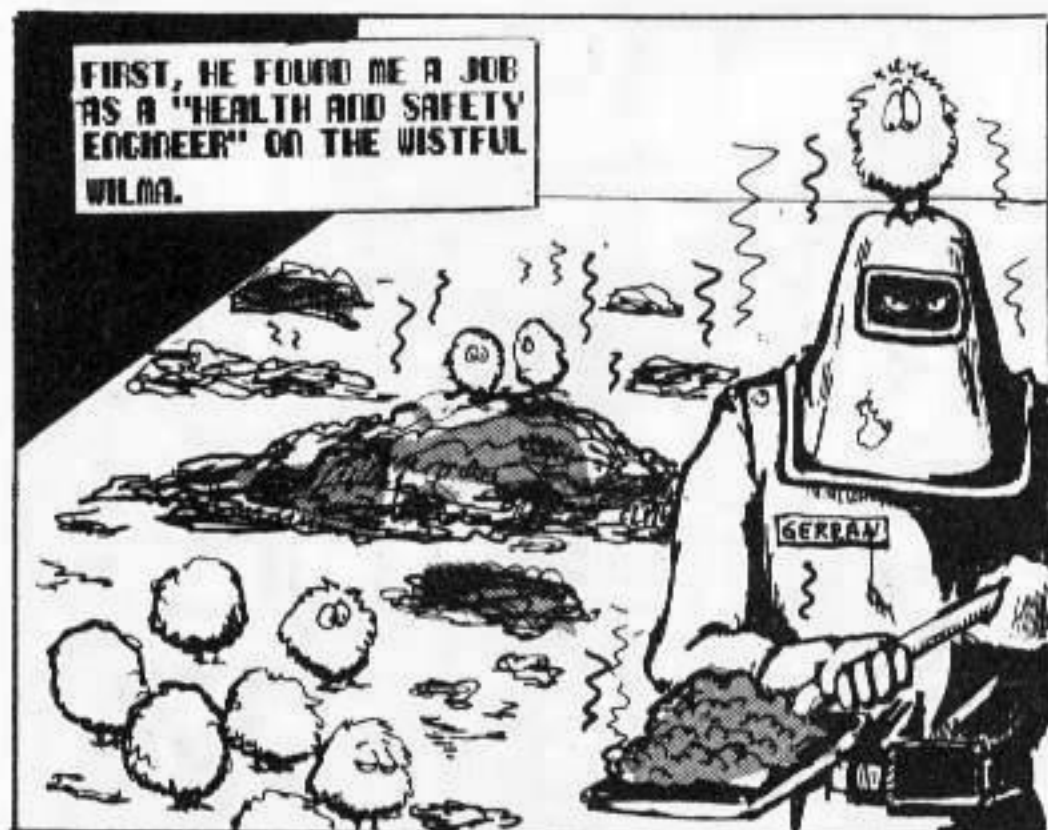
YES INDEEDY, IT'S YOUR LONG-LOST COUSIN, MRS GERAN THE GALACTIC GADABOUT, WHO JOINED THE MERCHANT FLEET UNION ON THE THEORY THAT NOTHING COULD POSSIBLY BE WORSE THAN STAYING IN HOPELESS HAVEN, FARMING MUD WORMS.

REMEMBER THOSE RECRUITING ADS-- THE ONES THAT SHOW OUR HERO GETTING THE ASSIGNMENT OF HER CHOICE FROM HER FRIENDLY UNION REP? WELL, I ENLISTED WITH CHEERFUL CHUCKLES COLPHER AND SAID I WANTED ASSIGNMENTS WHERE I COULD SEE THE UNIVERSE AND MEET NEW AND INTERESTING BEINGS.

"NEW AND INTERESTING" HARDLY DESCRIBES THE BERTHS CHUCKLES FOUND FOR ME.



FIRST, HE FOUND ME A JOB AS A "HEALTH AND SAFETY ENGINEER" ON THE WISTFUL WILMA.



NEXT HE FOUND ME A PLACE ON THE HIPPRINGER, WHICH WAS CREWED EXCLUSIVELY BY FOCAULT PARAFENS.



THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM, THEY SAY.

ENLIST!

IF AT FIRST YOU
DON'T SUCCEED,
DESTROY ALL
THE EVIDENCE!

TIME IS MONEY!

TECHS!

Carry the
Found Ones
GO TO NEW AND
INTERESTING PLACES
MEET STRANGE AGENTS
AND KILL THEM

RE-UP

I POINTED OUT MY STERLING CAREER.

2nd grade
MRS. SIMONS
CITIZENSHIP AWARD
MIMSY

CONTRACT

Take the
The P
the S

I STOOD UP FOR MY RIGHTS.

I TOLD CHUCKLES I WANTED
O-U-T AND O-F-F THE
HIPFINGER.

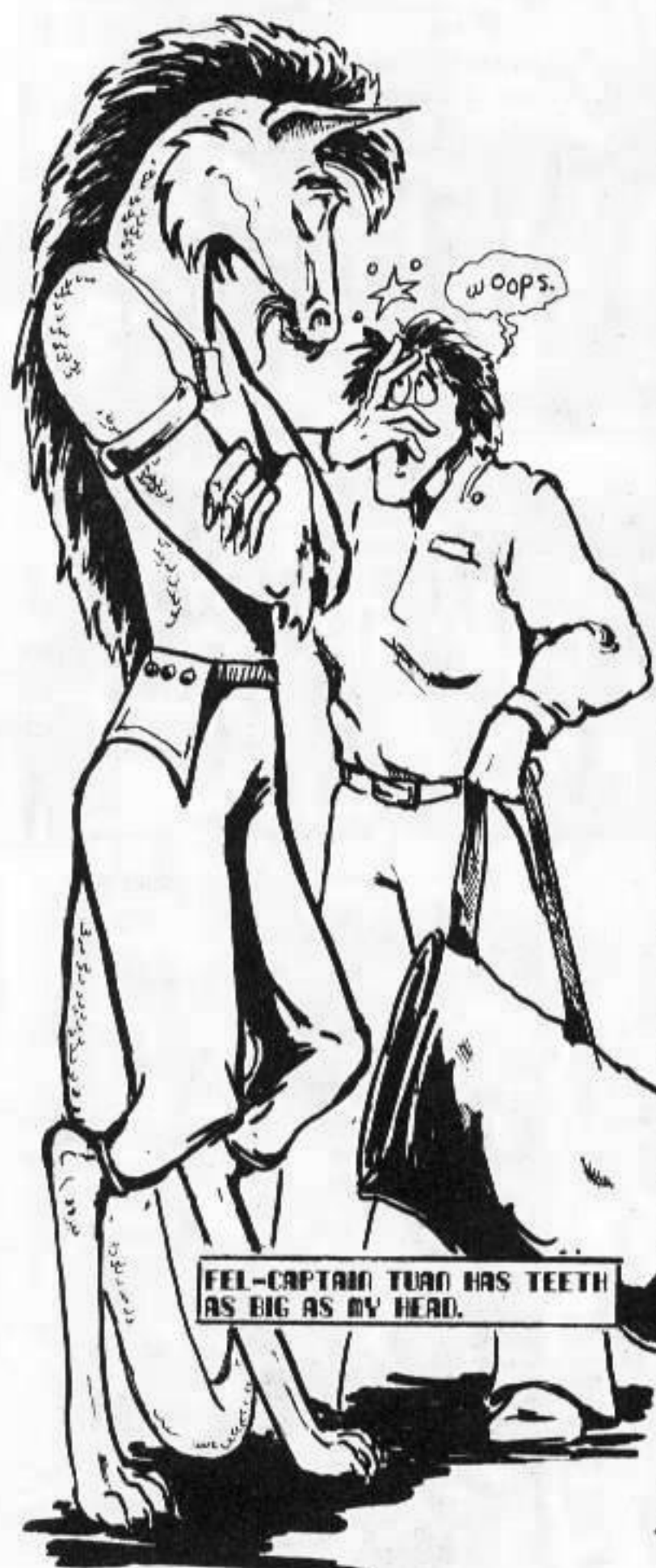
CHUCKLES WAS MOVED BY MY FLIGHT.

SURELY NOTHING COULD BE WORSE
THAN A SHIP FULL OF FOCAULT
PARAFERS.

WHAT I GOT WAS A BERTH ON THE TAMORLA, A UNIVERSITY SHIP
CREWED BY VELARIAN DRAGONS....



FEL-CAPTAIN TUAN IS 7 FEET TALL.



FEL-CAPTAIN TUAN ISN'T TERRIBLY
IMPRESSED BY HUMANS OR MUCH OF
ANYONE OR ANYTHING ELSE.



DON'T LET "SWEETUNS"
SPOOK YOU.







WHAT'S IN
HERE?

WHAT ARE YOU?



GIVE ME THAT!

CAN YOU EAT IT?

THAT'S REALLY UGLY!

NO.

EEEW!

WHAT'S THIS?



GET OUT OF
THERE, YOU
LITTLE TWITS!



MOMMMMM

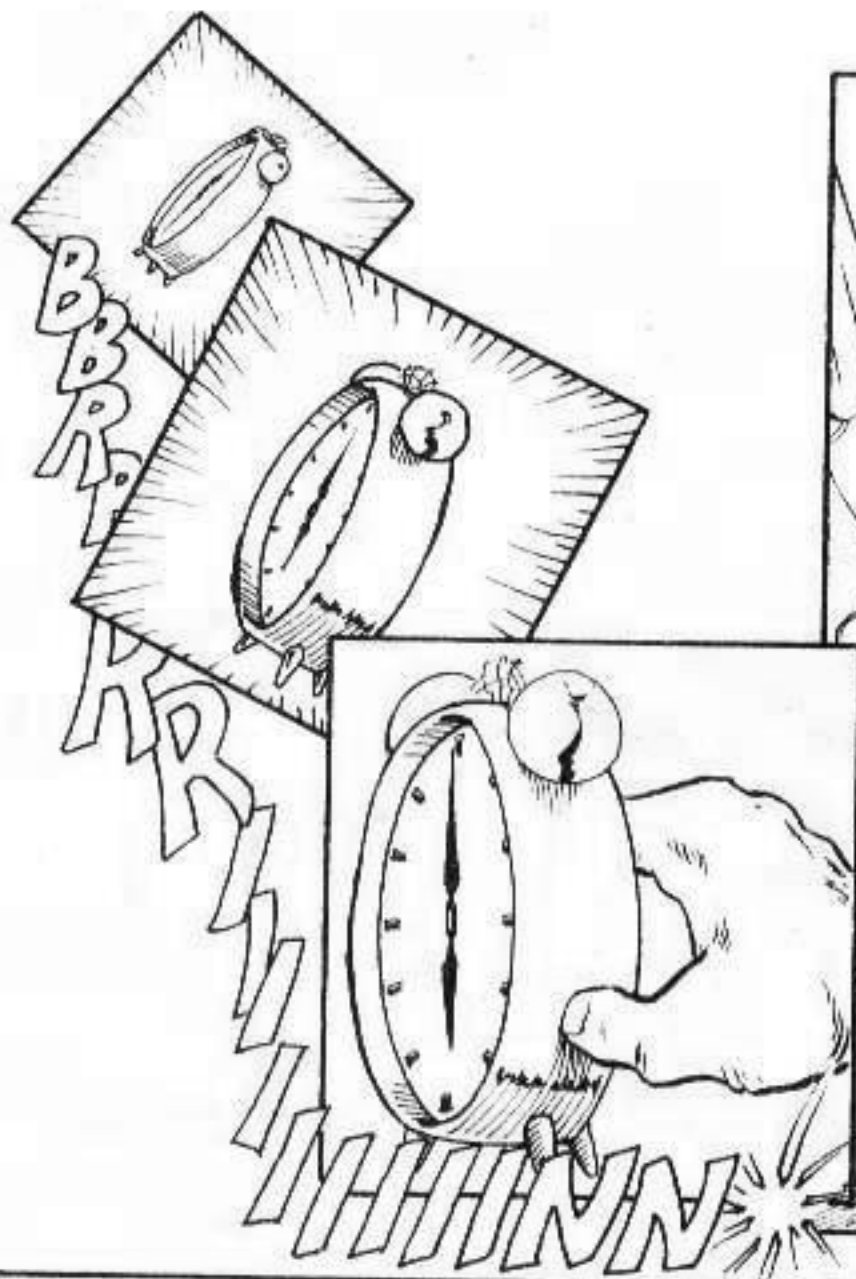
A REMARKABLY POOR CHOICE FOR YOUR LAST WORDS.
DIPLOMACY'S OBVIOUSLY NOT HOMO SAPIENS'
STRONGEST POINT.



MOMMMMM

(c) MEL WHITE
1987

— CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE —



SHE LEFT ME
SIX MONTHS
AGO TODAY

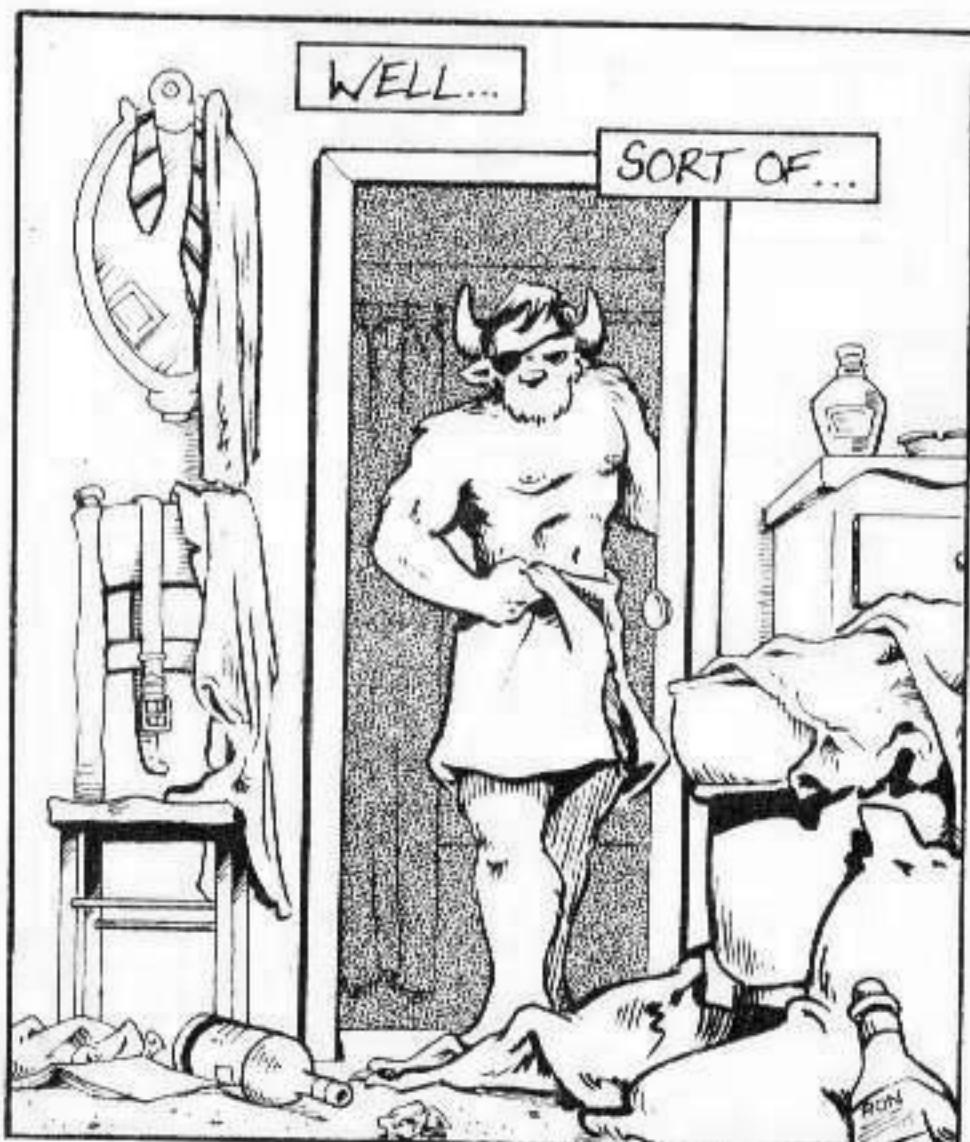


THE NOTE SAID
SHE JUST COULDN'T
TAKE IT ANYMORE



THAT'S
ALRIGHT
THOUGH...

... I DO OKAY
ON MY OWN.



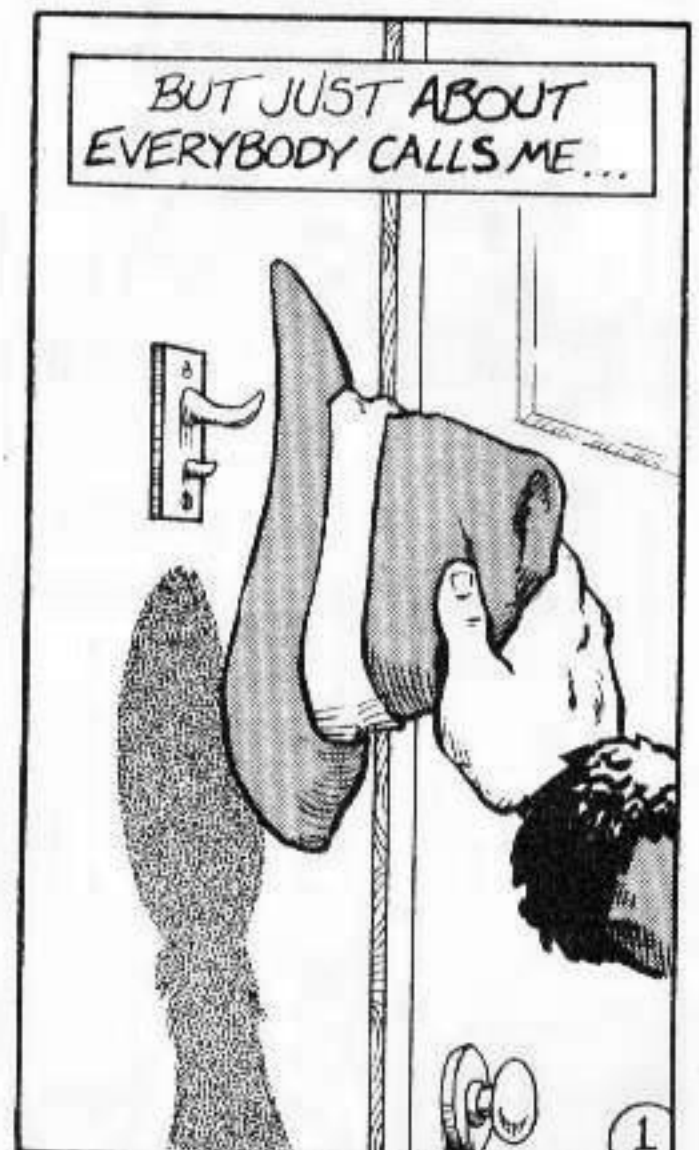
WELL...

SORT OF...



BY THE WAY...
JUST IN CASE YOU'RE
WONDERING...

... MY NAME IS
OLIVER ST. CLOUD



BUT JUST ABOUT
EVERYBODY CALLS ME...



I SUPPOSE YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO MY EYE. STRANGELY ENOUGH, I DON'T KNOW. MY GIRLF... MY EX-GIRLFRIEND SAID SHE FOUND ME UNCONSCIOUS AND BLEEDING IN A DESERT OUTSIDE ONE OF THE LOCAL VILLAGES.

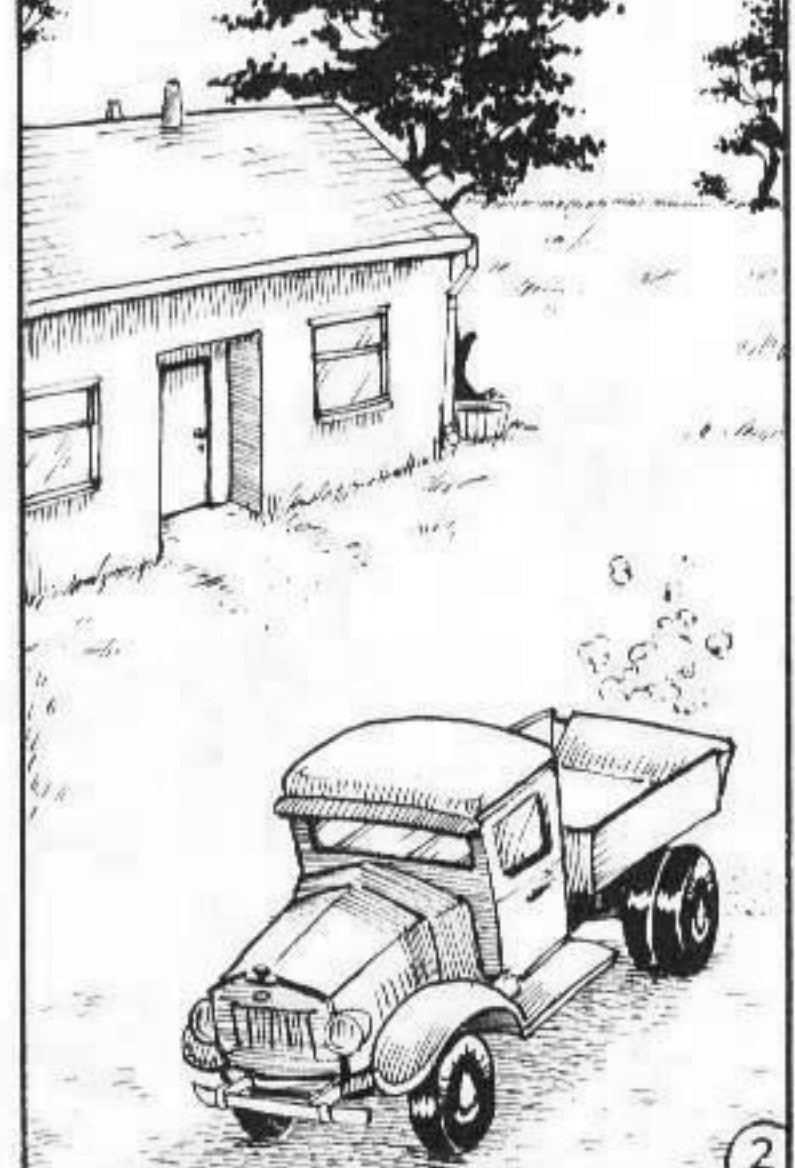


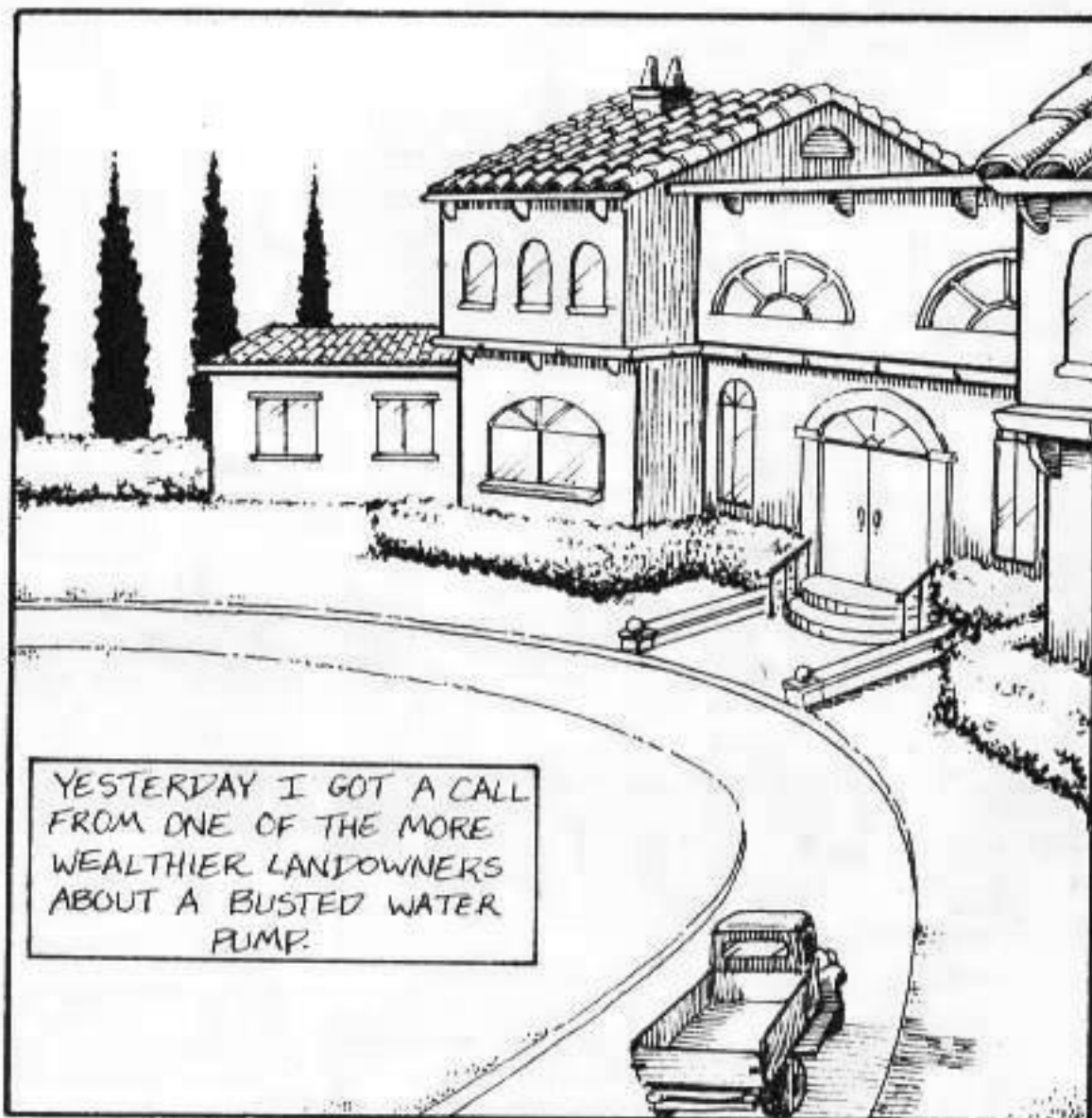
SHE SAID MY EYE LOOKED AS THOUGH IT HAD BEEN TORN OUT. I DON'T KNOW. ALL I REMEMBER IS WAKING UP IN A HOSPITAL BED WITH THIS DAMN PATCH ON.

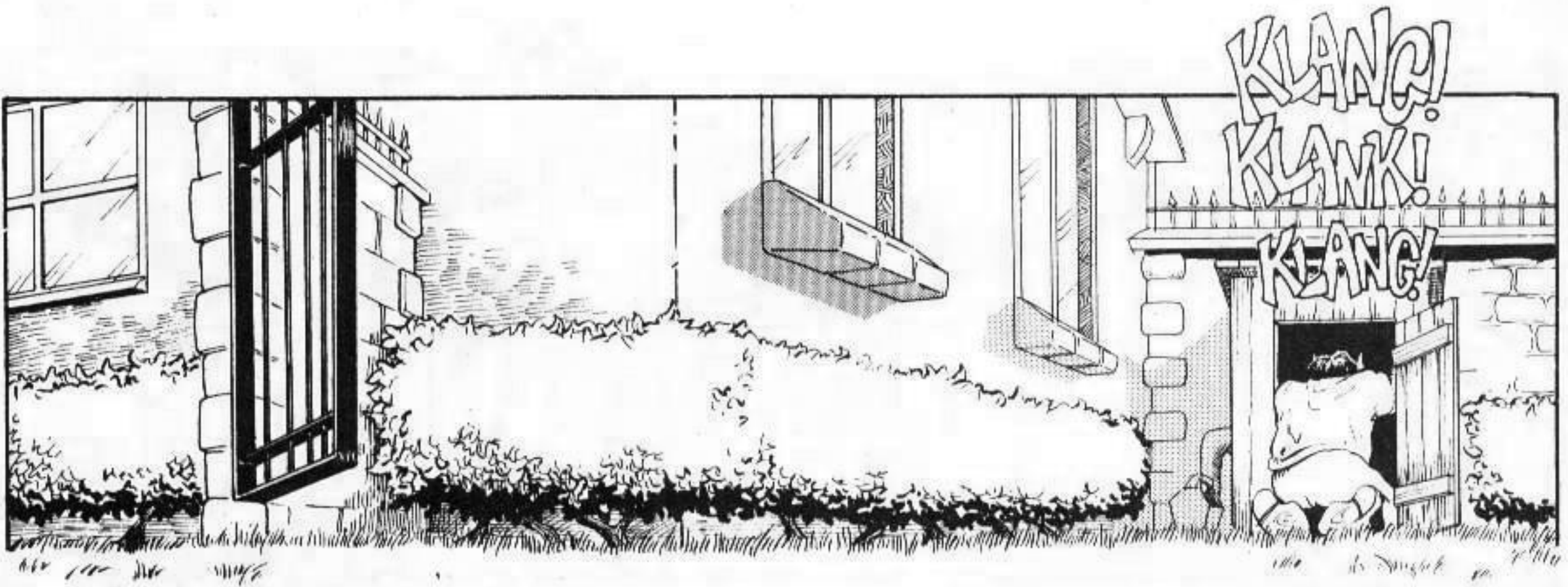
PRESENTLY, I WORK FOR BARCO INDUSTRIES: A WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION THAT PROVIDES UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH RUNNING WATER.

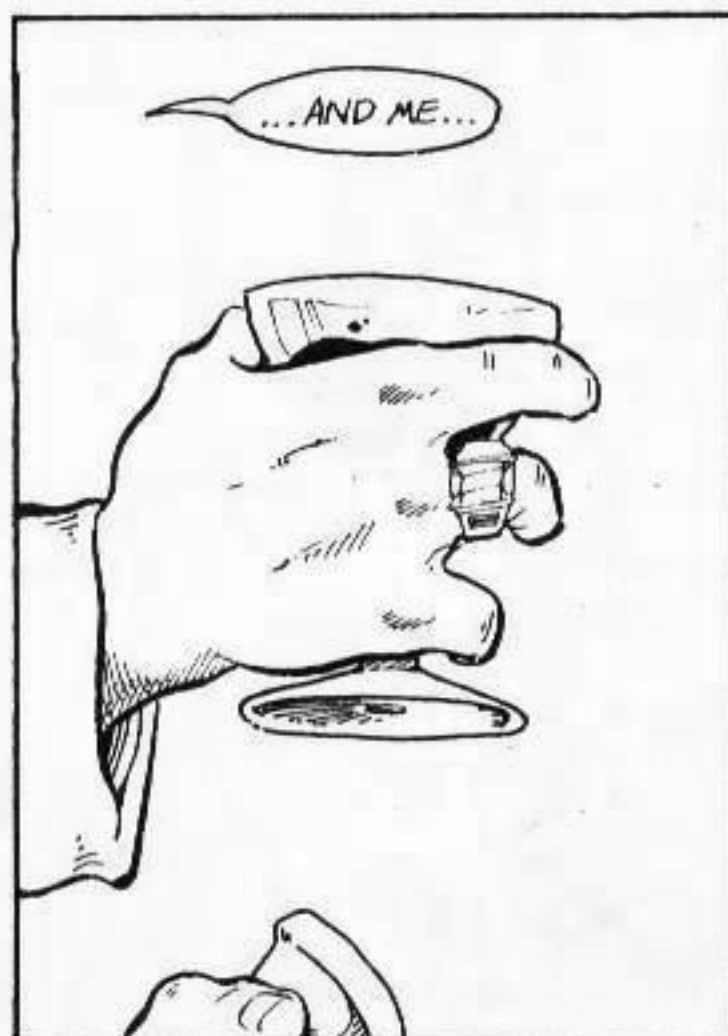


THEY'VE HAD ME STATIONED HERE IN BOTSWANA FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS. IT'S NOT THE GREATEST JOB IN THE WORLD, BUT IT'S REALLY THE ONLY THING I'M OKAY AT DOING.











THE OLD MAN'S FACE GOES VERY BLANK, AND HE SNAPS A CRISP SALUTE, AND ANNOUNCES...

SAR'N MAJOR
WILLIAM BELL,
FIFTH
WOOLABONGA
RANGERS!
SAH!!



GAWD SAVE KING GEORGE THE FIFTH...
HE'S AN AUSSIE!

UND A OLT VON,
FROM DE FIRST VAR;
HE IST
KEPT
SO LONG.



SO! DEY KEEP YOU HERE ALL YOU
LIFE? YOU NEVER GO HOME TO
AUSTRALIA?

OWSTRALIA?
VHAT
IS
DOT,
PLIZ?



HE'S CHANGED ACCENTS AGAIN.
MAYBE YOU HERE LONG ENOUGH,
YOU LOSE ALL YOU TEACUPS
OUT YOU CUPBOARD.

SECTION
EIGHT,
HUH?



MAYBE **HE** KNOWS ABOUT
THIS PLACE. MAYBE HE
CAN HELP US GET
OUTTA HERE.

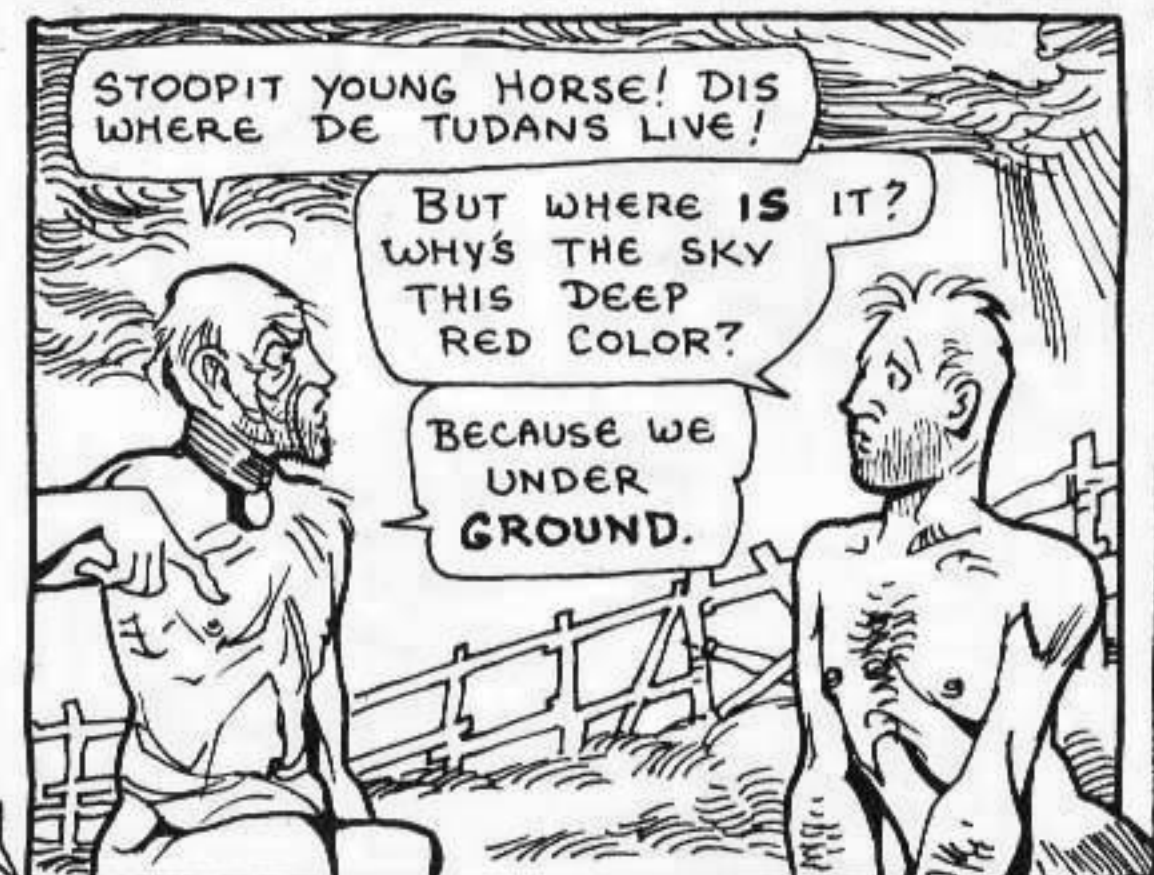
LIKE HE
DID HELP
HIMSELF
GET OUT?

WALTZIN'
MATILDA
WALTZIN'
MATILDA
&



HEY, OLD MAN, WHERE ARE WE,
AND WHAT ARE THESE HORSE-
HEADED GUYS?

HUH?



STOOPIT YOUNG HORSE! DIS
WHERE DE TUDANS LIVE!

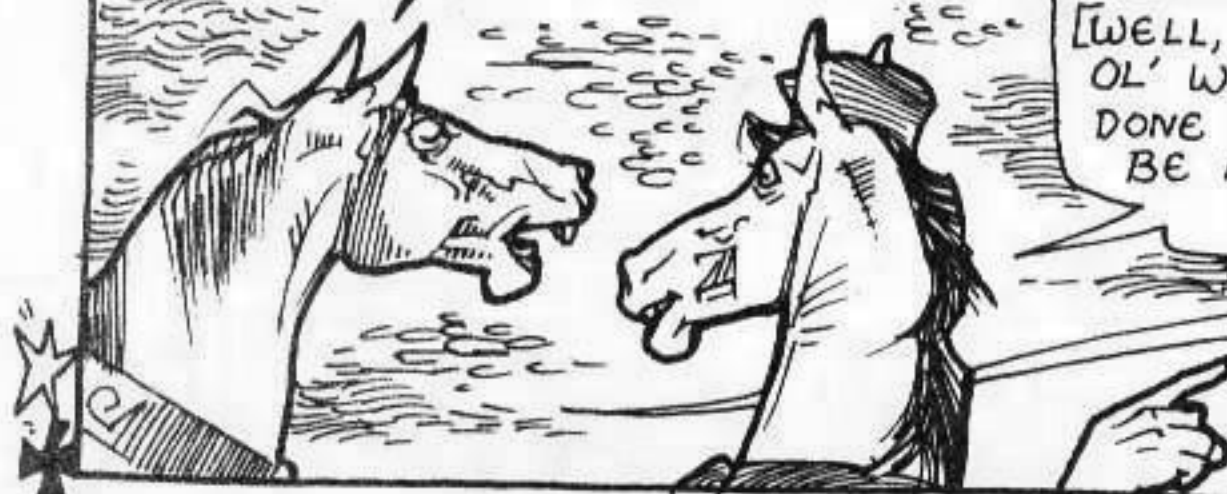
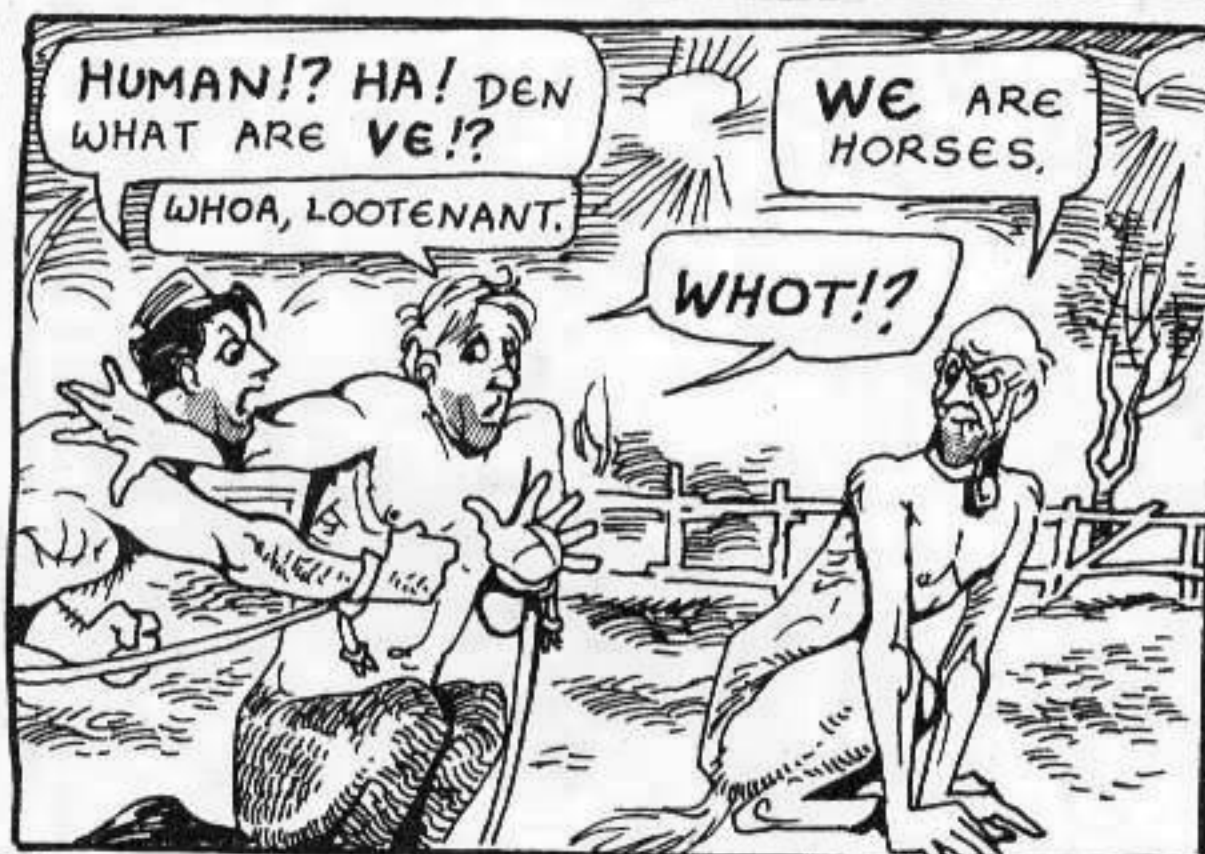
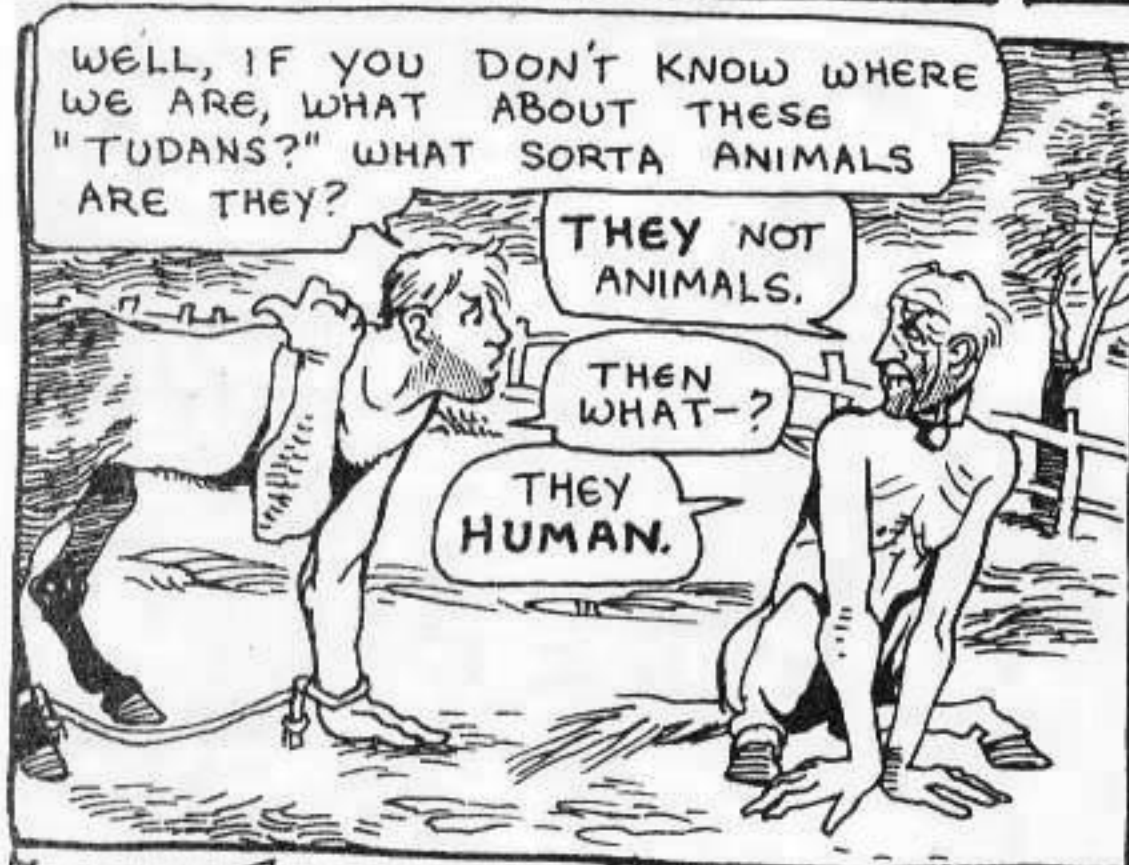
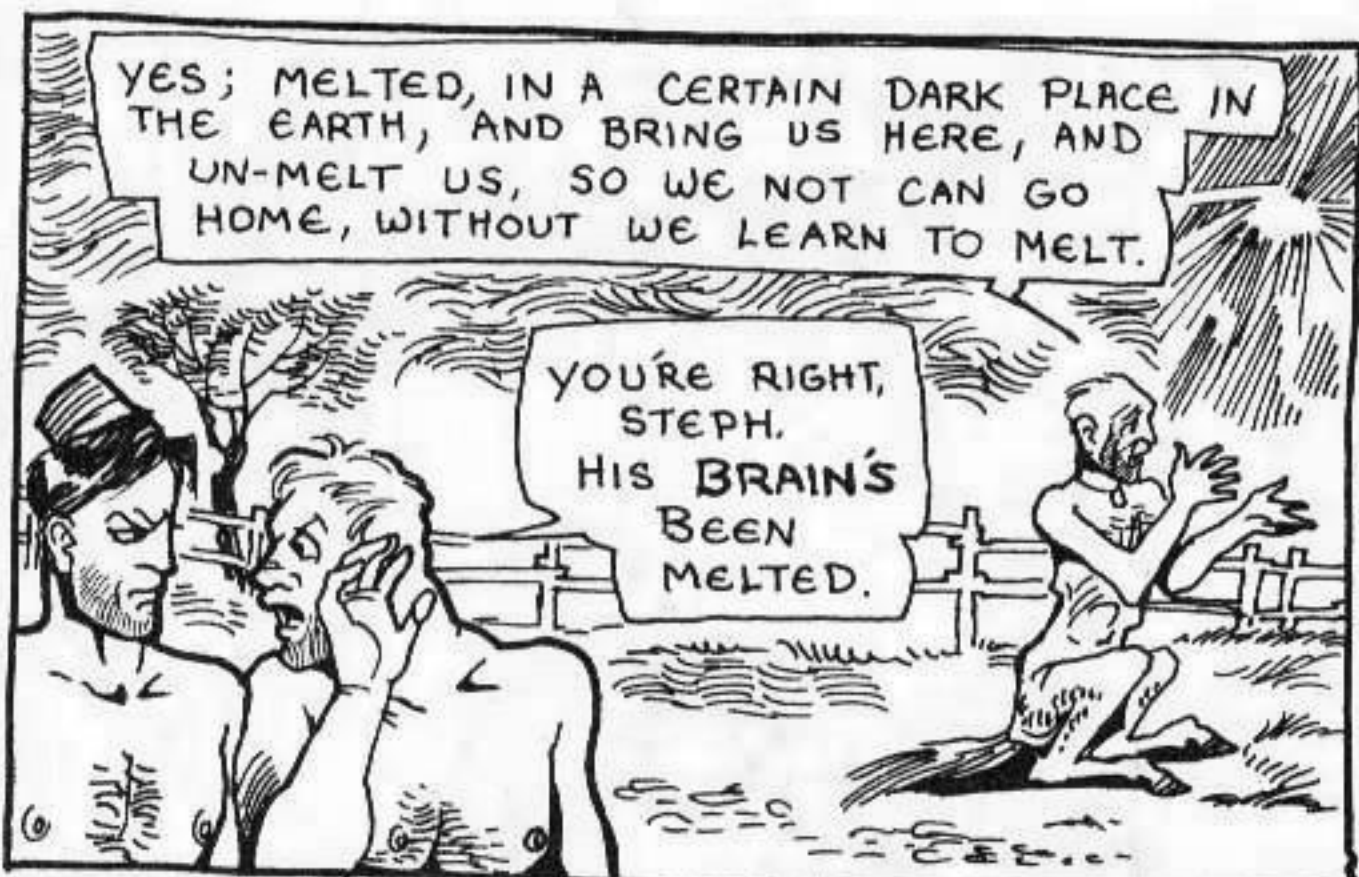
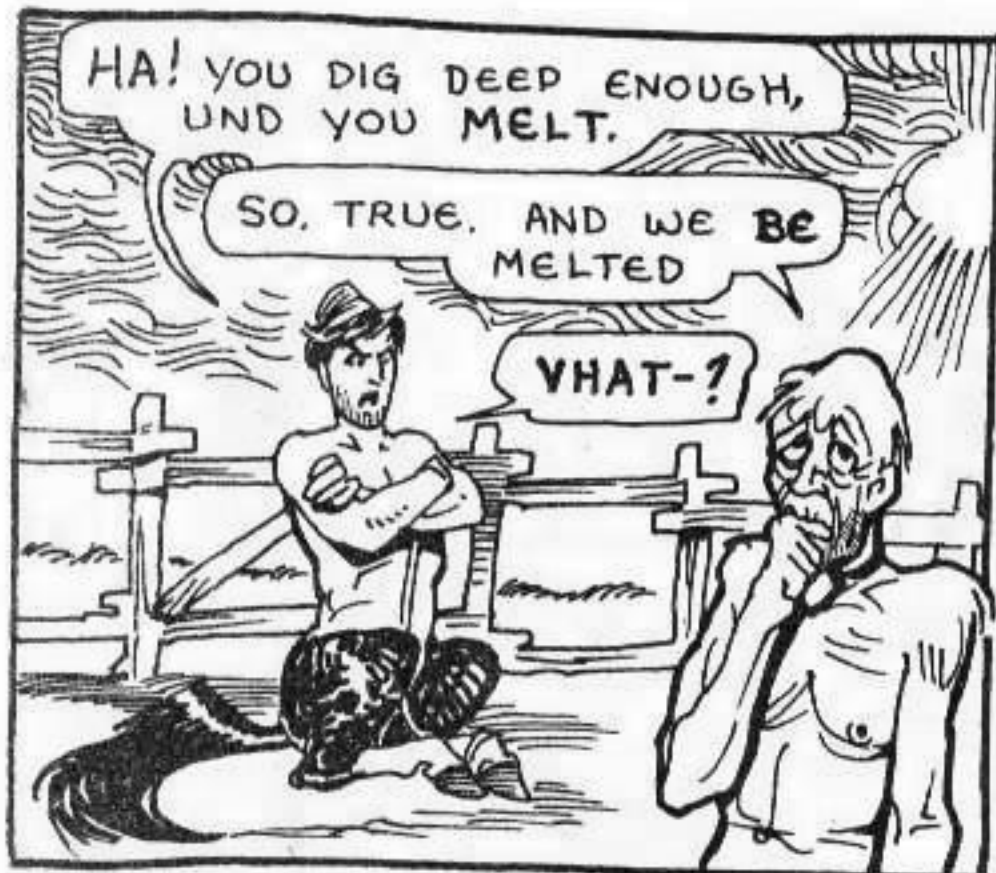
BUT WHERE **IS** IT?
WHY'S THE SKY
THIS DEEP
RED COLOR?

BECAUSE WE
UNDER
GROUND.



ACH, KOMM! HOW CAN DOT BE?
VE MINE, UND DIG, UND NEFER
FIND DIS PLACE!

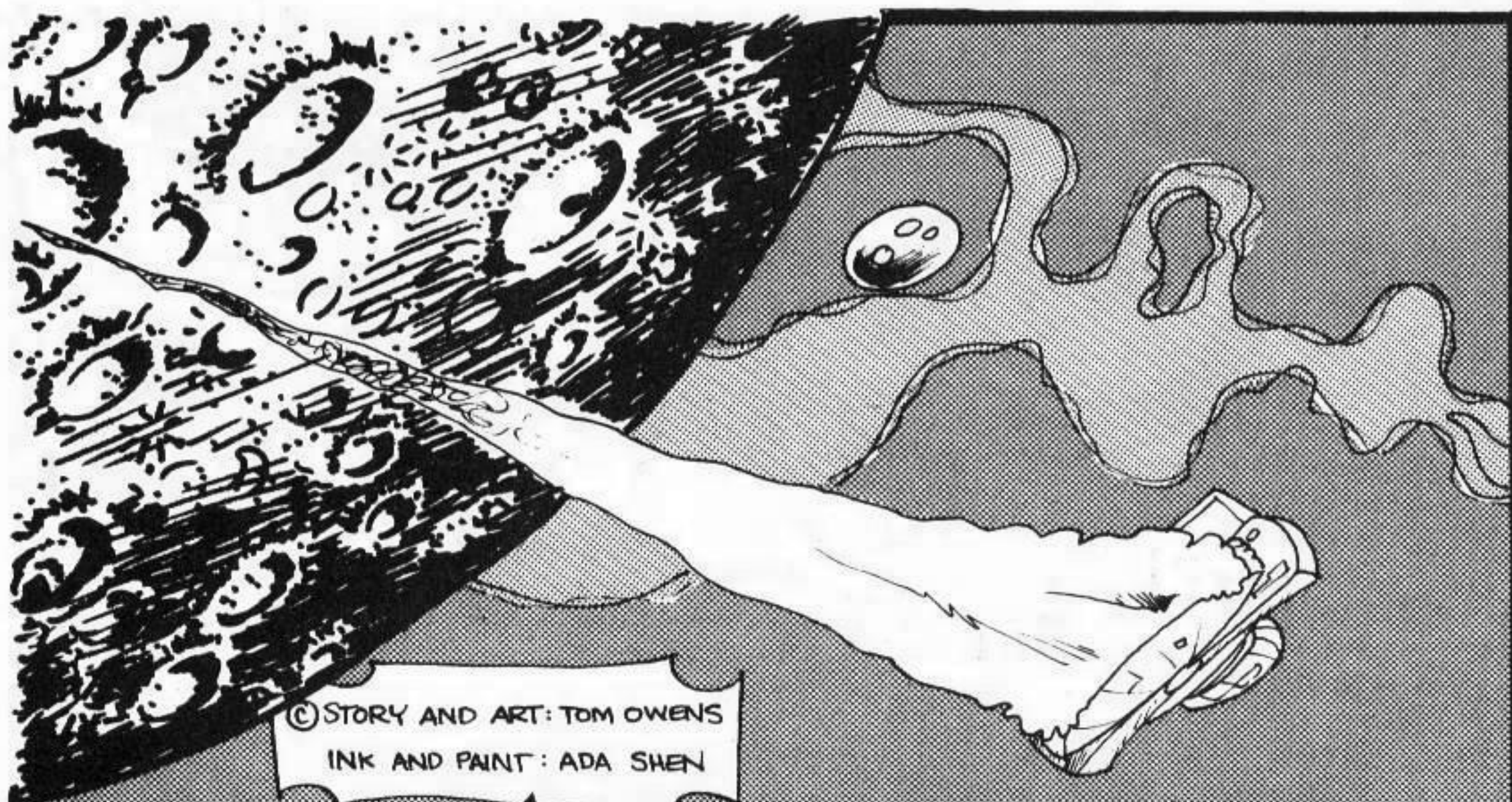
IT'S
DOWN
DEEP.







EIN ENDE.

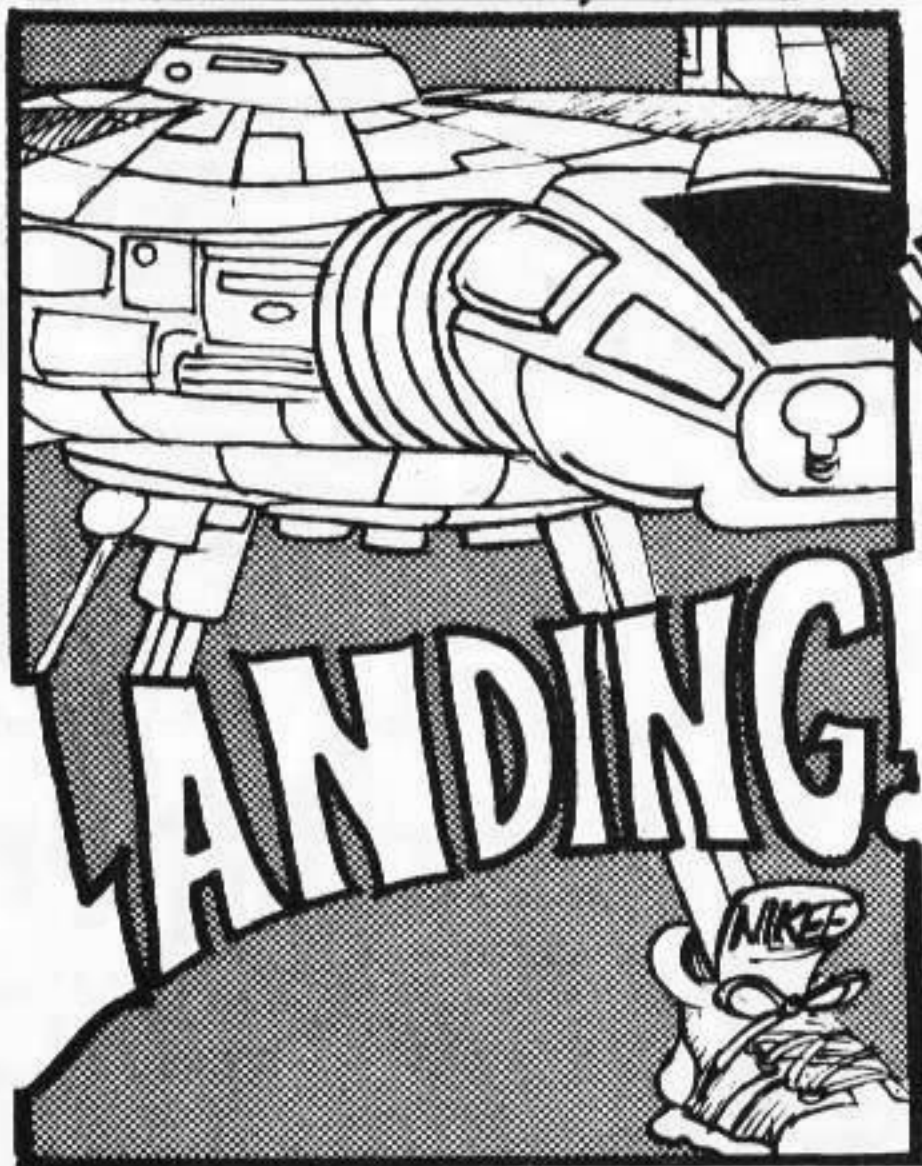
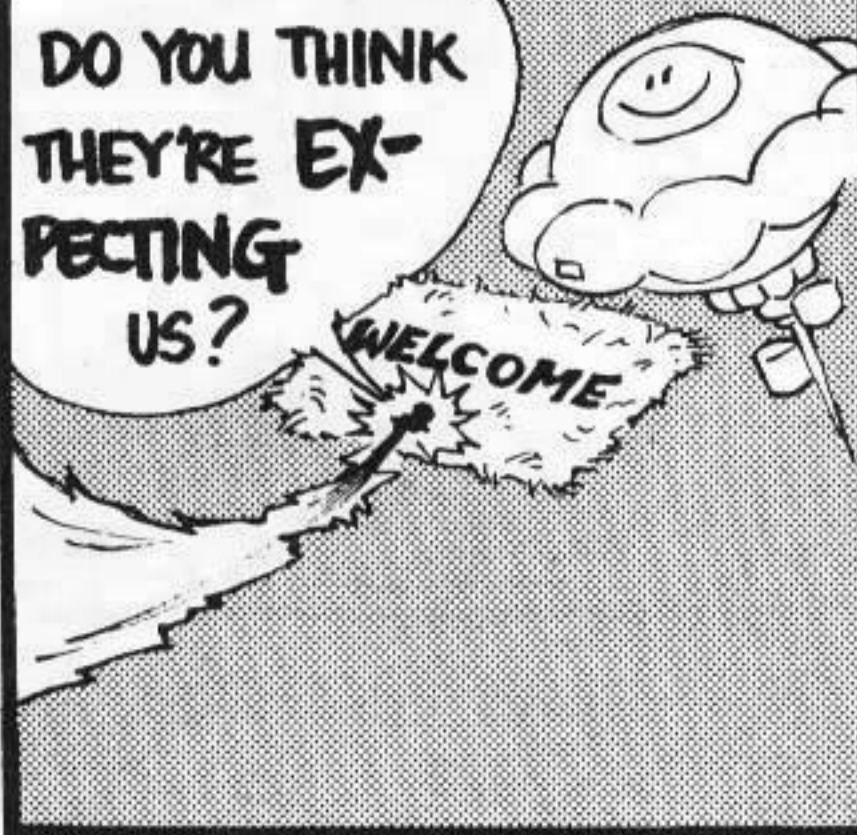


© STORY AND ART: TOM OWENS
INK AND PAINT: ADA SHEN

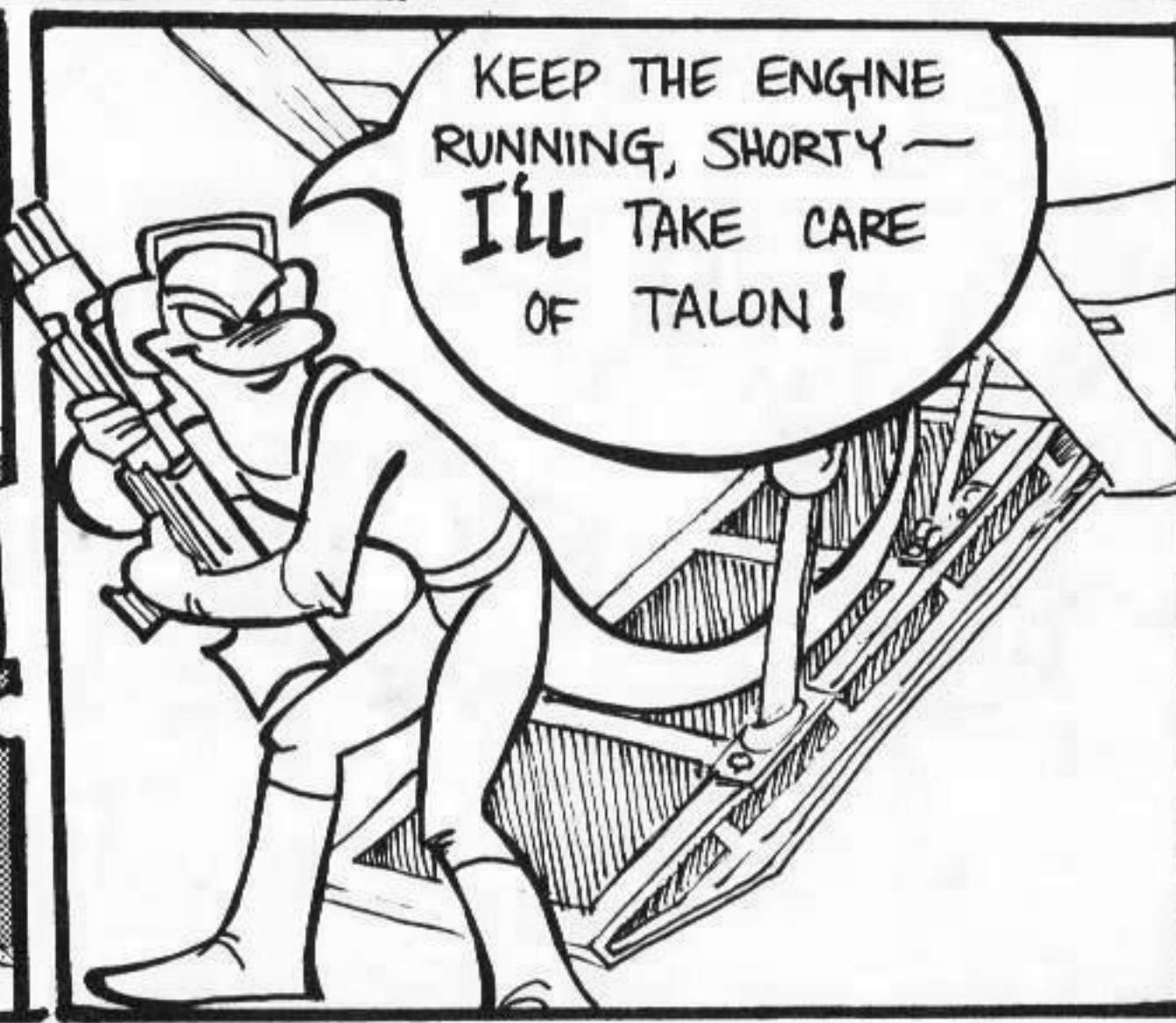
THERE IT IS!

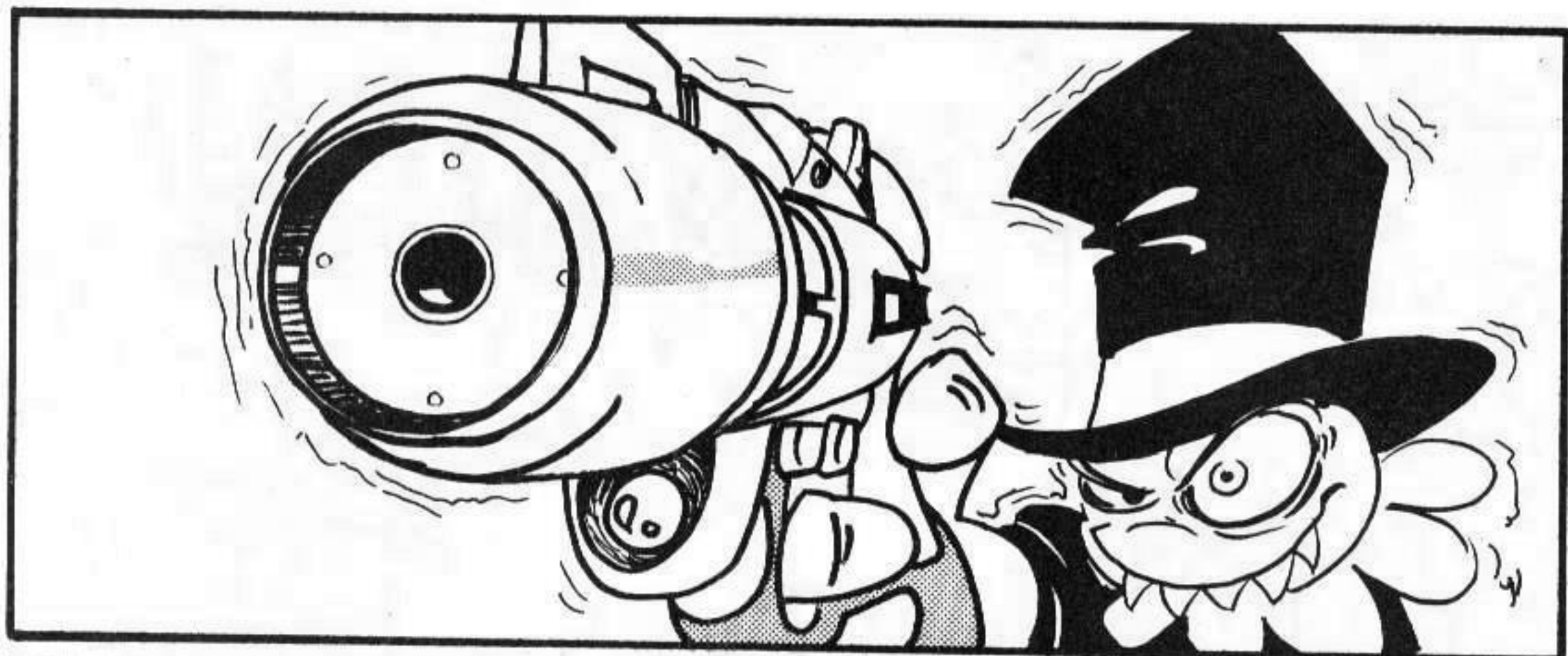


DO YOU THINK
THEY'RE EX-
PECTING
US?



KEEP THE ENGINE
RUNNING, SHORTY —
**I'LL TAKE CARE
OF TALON!**





AH. NOW **THIS** PUTS A DAMPER ON THINGS...GUESS I'LL HAVE TO USE THE OL' 'PERSUASIVE HERO' ACT.

WHY DID YOU DO IT TALON? WHY DID YOU TURN TO A LIFE OF CRIME? SHAMELESSLY TAKING CANDY FROM TOTS! OF TEARING OUT THE LAST 10 PAGES OF MYSTERY NOVELS! WHY TALON? WHY?!



ONCE, I WAS AN OPPRESSED SMILEY-FACED STICKER 😊 — I WAS PEELED UP AND REPPRESSED AGAIN AND AGAIN! ON 'A' PAPERS, LUNCHPAILS, AND BUMPERS! LEFT TO WEATHER THE ELEMENTS OF A CRUEL, HEARTLESS UNIVERSE, FOREVER CURSED WITH THAT IDIOTIC GRIN ON MY FACE! BUT MY HATRED AND CONTEMPT FOR THE STICKER-BUYING PUBLIC BROUGHT ME TO LIFE! SO I AMASSED THESE MINIONS TO AID ME IN MY REVENGE! WITH THEIR HAPPINESS DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL TO MY OWN AWESOME NASTINESS, TOGETHER WE'LL **RULE THE UNIVERSE!**



OH REALLY?



WAAAH!



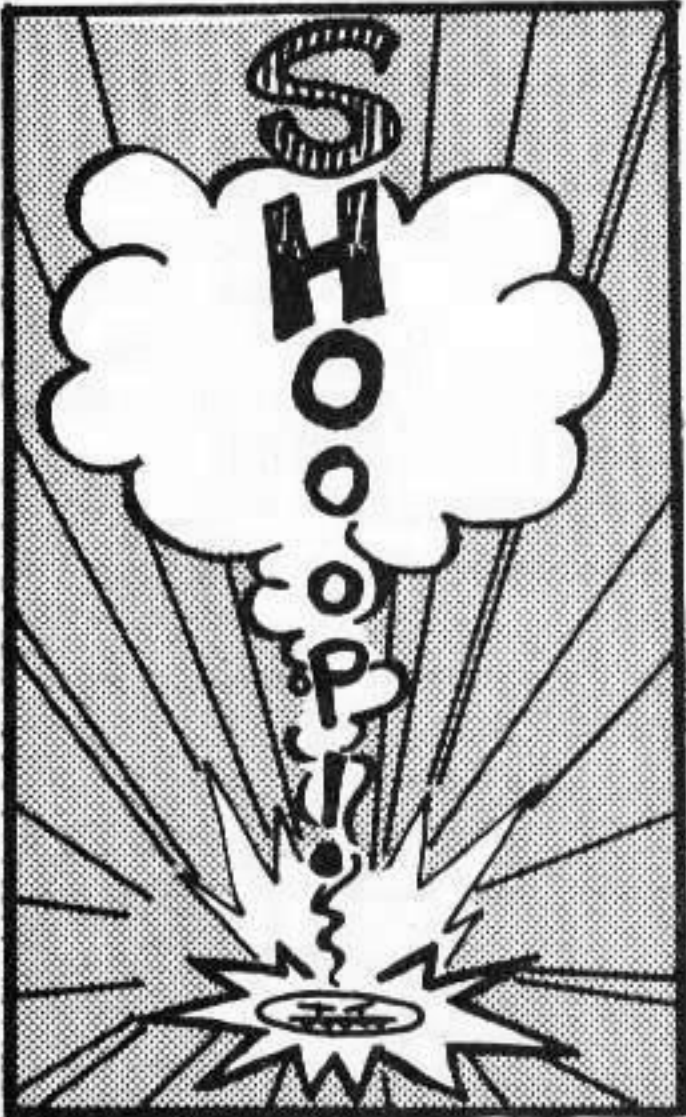
SNIF!



Noooooo



AND SO ENDS OUR STORY...



MORPHS

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Jim Groat

EDITORIAL #4
IN EXCITING 2-D

Yeah, yeah, I know we're late. Guilty as charged. I didn't want it to be but we are. We're late mostly due to the fact that we ran into a few problems with **Equine** and I wanted to clear them before we continued. We print **Morphs** and **Equine** at the same time, that way we save a few bucks. Also, a few artists ran into snags and were late themselves. I've now gotten a few readers submissions in that will see print very soon. One sooner than expected. Mel. White (best known for her work with Robert Asprin in **Duncan and Mallory**) submitted "Shakedown Cruise". Shakedown was supposed to be in #5 but, due to complications with Phil Morrissey, his conclusion to "Punk Mutants" will have to wait until #5. Thus not wanting a 5 page gap, Mel takes his place. We still need submissions, so send 'em in.

Some of you have been telling me that it's difficult to find **Morphs**. That your comic shop can't get it, saying it's unavailable through their distributor. You can do one of three things: 1) get a subscription 2) have your shop nag their distributor to get it 3) have your shop order directly from us.

Last, tell your friends about us, we don't have a big advertising budget and rely mostly on word of mouth. One last thing (I promise). Tom Owens' "Star Lizard" is supposed to be three pages long this issue; so don't think that something was left out.

"Interesting Life" is by Kjartan Arnorsson.

DISTRIBUTORS:

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MEL. WHITE

MEL. WHITE is the pseudonym of Mel. White, artist-in-residence at the White house in Dallas, Texas. By day she poses as a mild-mannered microcomputer expert and BBS sysop, but, when the sun goes down an' de tide goes out and she gets copious amounts of caffeine into her system, kids and cats flee in fear as she becomes transformed into...Mel. White, artist-in-residence at the White house...(see above).

In her spare time, she writes medical papers, bad poetry, worse folksongs, weird programs, interminable letters, novella-sized APAzines, invents bizarre uses for canned tuna, scribbles grocery lists in High Martian for her husband to decipher, composes peculiar notes to her friend and collaborator for DUNCAN AND MALLORY (Robert Lynn Asprin--you knew that--right???), and plays with swords and knives. But it keeps her off the streets and the world's probably a lot safer for that.



Jim,

Morphs #3 has proven to be as much of a departure from #2 as #2 was from #1.

The theme of #3 seemed to be that of change. The physical aspect of "Bosom Enemies" was obvious and the change of circumstances for "Star Lizard" as well.

"Punk Mutants..." seems to be in a state of chaos, but then, so is nature.

"Pleasure Palace" dealt with change in time, morals, tastes, and attitude.

"Botswana Bison", which left me stunned, dealt with an abrupt change in life.

Darin and Eric's work on those five pages was so intense, I actually felt his pain. Keeping the villain's face shaded was a good touch. I'm looking forward to more from these two.

Now at this rate, number 4 should be something extraordinary!

Keep it up!

Steven F. Scharff
Hillside Township, NJ

MORPHS

P.O. BOX 32292
TUCSON, AZ. 85751

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE TALENT?

We are soliciting submissions by any budding "funny-animal" cartoonists out there for possible publication in **MORPHS**.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE

DO NOT SEND YOUR ORIGINALS TO US!!

Send good xerox copies with an S.A.S.E. and your full address and phone number on a separate sheet of paper. Those submissions sent without an

S.A.S.E. will be **trashed**.

Who knows, your feature might be the new "Ninja Turtles".

Send submissions to:
MORPHS SUBMISSIONS
P.O. BOX 32292
TUCSON, AZ 85751

Also we're starting subscriptions for both **Equine** and **Morphs**. Cost is \$8.00 for 4 issues, \$16.00 for both books. Back issues are still available; \$5.00 for **Equine** #2, \$3.00 for **Equine** #3, \$2.00 for #4. We have a very few copies of #2 left. **Morphs** #1-\$4.00, **Morphs** #2-\$2.00, **Morphs** #3-\$2.00. Include \$.65 each for postage.

Here's a list of suggested reading. If you haven't seen 'em, give 'em a try. Tell them **EQUINE** sent you. "**ALBEDO**" by Steve Gallacci, P.O. Box 19419, Queen Anne Station, Seattle, WA 98109. "**MORPHS**", P.O. Box 32292, Tucson, AZ 85751. "**SPACE ARK**" by Ken Mitchroney, P.O. Box 787, Bethel, CT 06801. "**TALES FROM THE ANIVERSE**" by Randy Zimmerman, 1269 Russel Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198. "**PANDA KAHN**" by Dave Garcia, P.O. Box 95, 2422 E. Verde, Holtville, CA 92250. From Fantagraphics Books; "**CRITTERS**", "**USAGI YOJIMBO**" by Stan Sakai, "**CAPTAIN JACK**" by Mike Kazaleh, c/o Fantagraphics Books, 4359 Cornell Rd., Agoura, CA 91301.

And of course, the masters (please bow and recite after me...) "**TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES**" by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, P.O. Box 417, Haydenville, MA 01039. "**CEREBUS**" by Dave Sim, P.O. Box 1674 Stn C Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2.

Jim;

My two favorites in the issues you sent me are Speidel's "Kitty Malone" and Donna Barr's "Bosom Enemies". Speidel's art is a bit loose, but I'll put up with a lot for a storyline so lively as The Sleeping Buddha. Will be looking forward to more of Kitty.

"Bosom Enemies" sets up an intriguing situation. Now we wait to see how it develops. Say...four parts...that means the story finishes up early in the Fall. If you stay on schedule. This story looks like being worth the wait; but the multi-part story in small press comics probably did them as much harm as any other single factor on the recent boom-bust cycle. Wish somebody would come up with an alternative. (albums?)

Anyway.

Will be looking forward to future issues of **Morphs** and the **Red Shetland** mini-series. And **Equine**, of course.

Claude Saxon
Memphis, TN

FEL-CAPTAIN TUAN IS 7 FEET TALL.



COPYRIGHT MEL WHITE 1988

Dearest, Thoughtful, Twisted, Rabid Sir Groat,

Some praise and some pause on your third issue of **Morphs**.

In defense of Owens' "Star Lizard": True, fans of Boris Vallejo may find Owens' art a little simplistic, but what he lacks in substance he makes up for in presentation. His execution of visual gags (like our hero's whomping down his prison door) smacks of the cinematic style of a film editor. He succeeds in translating the movie from his mind into ours. So what if he can't draw? I'd put him behind a typewriter, storyboard or moviola any day. He proves that not all underground comics have to be about middle earth, nazis or bestiality to be fun. Get off his case, readers. Now get outta here...

Ms. Barr's "Bosom Enemies" has an intriguing story, but visually it is a bit dense. If I wasn't used to reading left to right, I would have been in trouble from page one.

I have some reservations with Mr. Morrissey's "Punk Mutants." Though I enjoy his self effacing humor and the artwork of each individual panel, drawing them together so tightly suffocates my eyes. I understand the original copy is reduced to fit the page, but is there a compromise, Jim, so that we can enjoy all the detail without a magnifying glass?

I enjoyed the Pusycat Theater manhunt in Linehan's "J.L. Coon." But I could not help wondering how busy Brenda's phone would be if anyone tracked down the area code of her number on Jocko's fatal bathroom wall.

Finally, hats off to Davis and Wagner's "Botswana Bison." Everything you could want in a strip and more: a "what's-gonna-happen-next?" plot, the composition of a skilled director and detailed art enhanced by clean, clean, clean inking and separation of panels. It gives the eye room to breathe ("Punk Mutants" take note) while leaving us breathless for more.

Best of luck, Grotus, on future **Morphs** and **Equine, the Uncivilized**, whose exploits I certainly miss. Hope you iron out the production snags and get issue #5 out us soon.

Thanks again for the Roger Rabbit buttons and please remind everyone to vote Melmacian this November.

Marlow Weisman
Hermosa Beach, CA

As the ole Alfer sez: No Problem!

Dear Editor,

It's not a habit of mine to subscribe to any and all comic mags, despite being a heave reader of such.

My reasons are twofold, and rather simple. First, both comics are rather a rare item down here (especially now, when the flood of independent comics is dying out. It was going to happen sooner or later. Ninety percent of what was being churned out was uninteresting, for my taste. Unfortunately, most of the GOOD comics that came out are also suffering.)

Second reason; I enjoy them both, obviously. Otherwise I would not be willing to put up the money for such endeavors.

I'm rather pressed for time, but I would like to sneak a couple of little comments in here.

I like the anthro-horses that are drawn for **Equine**. You find lots of cats, dogs, mice and ducks in the anthropomorphic department, but very few horses. It's a refreshing change (especially the zebra types, like the one on the back cover of **Morphs** #3, and the one that showed up as scenery in **Equine** #3. Very original, that. I would love to see one given a major roll, though they must be a pain to draw, with all those stripes).

Outside of the art, which is nice, **Equine** is effectively walking a fine line between serious storylines and comedy. At the moment, the balance works, and that satisfies me. How long it can be kept up remains to be seen. Hopefully, for some time.

I'll end with a few comments on **Morphs**. If I'm not mistaken, the main purpose of this mag is to give basically new talent a chance to get their feet wet. As such, perfection is not to be expected. So I am not too critical of any strip that has so far been presented.

Out of the two issues I own so far, the big favorites are "Kitty Malone", "Botswana Bison", "J.L. Coon", and "Punk Mutants". Quite a large group there. May there be more such like in the future. The others I don't really dislike, they just haven't struck a cord.

All in all, a decent comic, with a worthy goal of making the work of lesser known artists available to the readers. Hopefully there will be enough interest from readers to keep this one going for some time.

Well, that's it. Keep up the good work, and thanks for the reading enjoyment.

John M. Fellers
Austin, TX



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INTERESTING LIFE....

